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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 9884
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0049
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 1010
RUEHTRO/USLO TRIPOLI PRIORITY 0019
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNFB/DIR FBI WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 010563

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DEPT FOR EAP/IET AND S/CT
DOJ FOR CTS THORNTON, AAG SWARTZ
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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [KJUS](#) [ASEC](#) [AS](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: BA'ASYIR SPOUTS OFF ABOUT SHARIA`, JIHAD AND BALI BOMBERS

REF: A. A. JAKARTA 8929(BA'ASYIR ENJOYING HIGHER PROFILE AFTER RELEASE)
[1](#)B. B. 05 JAKARTA 11875 (UGLY TRENDLINE IN ONGOING ISLAMIC DEBATE)
[1](#)C. C. JAKARTA 10037 (AGO THREATENS TO EXECUTE BALI BOMBERS)

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Classified By: Political Officer Catherine Sweet, Reason 1.4 (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Abu Bakr Ba'asyir, the spiritual head of Jemaah Islamiyah and its political wing, the Majelis Mujahiddin Council (MMI), continues to speak publicly on a variety of topics following his release from prison on June 14, 2006. Most notably, Ba'asyir has pontificated about the need for Islamic law (sharia) in Indonesia and MMI's obligation to carry out "humanitarian" jihad in Lebanon and Palestine, while reiterating his doubts that Indonesians were responsible for the 2002 Bali bombings (ref A). Ba'asyir's remarks are largely a rehash of his previous statements, and his support for jihad in Lebanon and Palestine smacks of opportunism. However, Ba'asyir seems to have become something of a headliner for hard-line Islamist political parties and groups. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) Abu Bakr Ba'asyir continues his public tour de force following his June 14 release from prison (ref A). In a series of lectures, interviews and sermons in Jakarta and East Java, Ba'asyir has spoken out provocatively on a range of issues, culminating in an exposition delivered on August 20 at Jakarta's National Mosque (Mesjid Istiqlal), which is administered by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). (Note: As described in ref B, MUI issued a number of controversial religious decrees, or fatwas, in 2005 that, among other things, deemed "religious pluralism, liberalism and secularism" prohibited under Islamic law. End Note.) According to local press reports, Ba'asyir preached for ten minutes about the duty of "true leaders" to implement Islamic law, or sharia, in Indonesia. Ba'asyir implicitly rejected the democratic electoral process, contending that since Islamic law is God's law, "voting is not obligatory, getting agreement from others is not obligatory. Thus it is not necessary to pay attention to others' opinions." He "warned" Indonesia's leaders that they are responsible for governing

"100 percent" in accordance with sharia and said that there is no room for "bargaining."

¶3. (U) Ba'asyir was participating in a public "zikir," or Islamic recitation ceremony, to mark Indonesian Independence Day and honor the victims of recent natural disasters throughout Indonesia. This event, advertised in the local media as a public prayer session, featured speeches by Dr. Mohamed Ahmed Sherif, Secretary General of the Libya-based World Islamic Call Society, and Syrian Shaykh Muhammad Abdul Huda Al-Yaqoubi Al-Hassani, in front of thousands of worshippers. In attendance was another notorious Indonesian radical Islamist, Jaafar Umar Thalib, former head of Laskar Jihad (a violent extremist organization, ostensibly disbanded in 2003). The zikir marked Ba'asyir's first lecture at the Istiqlal Mosque since his release from prison.

Defend the Lebanese and Palestinians...

¶4. (C) The August 20 Istiqlal Mosque event was the most well-attended in a series of recent Ba'asyir orations. On August 18, Ba'asyir spoke to several hundred attendees at a Jakarta function sponsored by the Islamist Star and Crescent Party, or PBB. (Note: As reported in ref A, Ba'asyir was also a PBB guest speaker shortly after he got out of jail. PBB is headed by State Secretary Yusril Mahendra. End Note.)

Two days later, Ba'asyir delivered a sermon at Jakarta's Al-Hilal mosque and then spoke to reporters about MMI's plans to deploy paramilitary fighters to the Middle East, when/if the necessary permission is granted by the Government of Indonesia. The newspaper Indo Pos quoted Ba'asyir justifying the necessity of deploying "humanitarian" forces to assist Muslims in Lebanon and Palestine, saying that "to die while defending your dignity is an honor." (Comment: The GOI has made clear that it is illegal for paramilitary groups to

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travel for jihad. Ba'asyir surely knows that the permission will never come, strongly suggesting that he is just posturing. End Comment.)

¶5. (U) About three weeks earlier, Ba'asyir -- who was in Jakarta to participate in a program entitled "Muslim Solidarity Concerning Israeli Attacks in Palestine and Lebanon," identified Lebanon and Palestine as two legitimate places in which Muslims may carry out violent jihad. Speaking to reporters, Ba'asyir argued on August 2 that because "these countries are being destroyed by Israel, Muslims wishing to fight for their religion should go there instead of waging their war in Indonesia." He added that if they were unable to carry out jihad, his followers should support their coreligionists with money and/or prayer.

... But Leave the Americans Alone

¶6. (C) At the same time, Ba'asyir again enjoined Muslims to halt violent attacks on American interests. "There should be no more violence. There should (also) be no more bombing. If the aim is to fight the United States, I say that the fight must be non-violent," said Ba'asyir, according to the Antara news agency. Ba'asyir continued, saying that "the acts of violence in the past happened because of a misinterpretation of the concept of holy war." (Comment: We have no basis to believe that Ba'asyir has embraced non-violence. End Comment.)

Bali Bombings: The Hidden Hand of the CIA

¶7. (U) Finally, Ba'asyir has once again spun his wild tale alleging outside (read: CIA) responsibility for the 2002 Bali bombings (ref C). His August 21 remarks were most likely triggered by the impending execution of the three men convicted of the attacks. The bombers received a temporary

stay of execution that same day, after their attorneys filed a request for judicial review. At a mosque in Malang, East Java, Ba'asyir requested that the GOI conduct a new investigation to probe claims made by an unnamed "bomb expert" alleging that the Bali bombs were "micro-nuclear" and therefore demonstrably beyond the Bali bombers' assembling capabilities. Ba'asyir also reacted to the travel warning issued last week by the Government of Australia, which advises travelers that terrorist attacks in Indonesia might be imminent. The specificity of the warning, alleged Ba'asyir, suggests that the Australians themselves are planning these terrorist attacks.

18. (C) Comment: Ba'asyir's remarks are largely a rehash of previous statements of his, although his support of jihad in Lebanon and Palestine is new. Perhaps the most significant but not surprising aspect of his current activity is that it has taken on a remarkably pedestrian quality -- Ba'asyir appears to be not only less radioactive than one might hope, but actually something of a draw card for hard-line Islamist political parties and groups. Ba'asyir also is demonstrating once again that he is an opportunist, setting himself up as a defender of the greater Arabo-Islamic cause to capitalize on public anger over the crisis in Lebanon and Gaza. End Comment.
PASCOE